

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT MEG GREENFIELD ARTICLE, NEWSWEEK,
MARCH 1, 1976 ISSUE, HEADED "HENRY IN DECLINE."

2. I HAD KNOWN HENRY KISSINGER FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS WHEN
HE CAME TO WASHINGTON IN 1969. I REGARDED HIM AS A
BRILLIANT, AMUSING MAN WHO WOULD LAST ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES
ON THE WASHINGTON SCENE. THAT IS BECAUSE I ALSO THOUGHT
HIM A MAN WITHOUT ANY PARTICULAR POLITICAL GIFT: RELATIVELY
ASOCIAL, UNCHARISATIC AND GIVEN TO DOUBLE-DOME THINKING,
A DISPLACED PROFESSOR WHO WOULD NEITHER UNDERSTAND NOR BE
ABLE TO COPE WITH THE BYZANTINE PERSONAL, BUREAUCRATIC AND
JOURNALISTIC MANEUVERINGS THAT ARE THE ESSENCE OF LIFE
HERE.

3. THE ONLY THING I AM PROUD OF ABOUT THIS MISJUDGMENT IS
ITS SIZE, FIT PERHAPS FOR THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD
RECORDS. FOR KISSINGER PROMPTLY DEMONSTRATED HIMSELF TO
BE A MASTER OF BOTH PUBLIC POLITICAL STYLE AND SUBTERRANEAN
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POLITICAL ARTS--USE OF THE PRESS, NEUTRALIZATION OF OPPOSI-

TION, AN ABILITY TO OUTWIT AND PREVAIL. THESE HAVE BEEN CRUCIAL TO HIS IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN FOREIGN POLICY.

THEY ARE ALSO CRUCIAL TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TROUBLE HE IS NOW IN--AND IT IS, I THINK, BIG TROUBLE.

4. IN WASHINGTON, YOU DON'T HEAR NEARLY SO MUCH ABOUT "HENRY" ANY MORE, THE INTIMATE, ACCEPTING, EVEN VAGUELY AFFECTIONATE REFERENCE ONCE INDULGED BY THOSE WHO DIDN'T KNOW HIM, ALONG WITH THOSE WHO DID. YOU HEAR ABOUT "KISSINGER." THAT IS HARDER, MORE UNCOMMITTED, EVIDENCE OF A SUBTLE DISTANCING. POLITICALLY, KISSINGER IS CAUGHT IN A VISE BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT. ONE DAY IT IS RONALD REAGAN AND ADMIRAL ZUMWALT, THE NEXT IT IS MORTON HALPERIN AND OTIS PIKE.

5. KISSINGER'S SHARPENING POLITICAL PROBLEM IS THAT HE CANNOT PLACATE ONE SIDE--SAY, THE RIGHT ON SALT OR THE LEFT ON ANGOLA--WITHOUT FURTHER INFLAMING THE OTHER. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN HE COULD. FOR MANY YEARS EACH SIDE SEEMED EAGER TO BELIEVE THAT KISSINGER'S NODS AND CONCESSIONS TO THE OTHER WERE TACTICAL, EVEN PROVIDENTIAL, THAT HE HAD MANAGED TO AVERT A WORSE OUTCOME--FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW--BY YIELDING MINIMALLY TO THE OTHER SIDE'S PRESSURES. BUT THAT BANK ACCOUNT NOW SEEMS TO BE EMPTY. TOO MANY PEOPLE FEEL "HAD." AND WHAT IMMENSELY COMPLICATES THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE GOOD OLD GRAY MIDDLE CONSTITUENCY, THE ONE THAT USED TO TALK A LOT ABOUT HOW "POLITICS STOPS AT THE WATER'S EDGE," IS ALSO GONE. INCREASINGLY, WHERE KISSINGER IS CONCERNED, THERE SEEM TO BE MAINLY ENEMIES... AND NEUTRALS.

6. SOME OF THIS, OF COURSE, SIMPLY GOES WITH LONGEVITY IN OFFICE AND THE TIMES. SECRETARIES OF STATE ARE NOT KNOWN FOR GROWING MORE POPULAR AS THE YEARS GO BY: WE TEND TO GIVE THEM THEIR STATURE LONG AFTER THEY HAVE LEFT OFFICE, LIKE A DEFERRED PENSION PLAN. AND CONSIDERING THE TIDE OF EVENTS WITH WHICH HE HAS RIDDEN--A LOST WAR, A DEPOSED PRESIDENT, A FORMLESS AND SOMETIMES RECKLESS REASSERTION OF CONGRESSIONAL POWER AND A BREAKDOWN OF ALL THE TABOOS AND UNCLASSIFIED

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DECORUM THAT USED TO PROTECT A SECRETARY AND HIS SECRETS FROM SCRUTINY--IT MAY BE A WONDER THAT KISSINGER IS NOT IN WORSE SHAPE.

7. STILL, A LARGE PART OF THE TROUBLE IS DISTINCTIVE: KISSINGER IS PAYING A PERSONAL PRICE FOR PERSONAL SUCCESS ACHIEVED IN A VERY PERSONAL WAY. HE HAS BESTED TOO MANY ADVERSARIES IN GOVERNMENT AND THESE HAVE BECOME ENEMIES.

AND HE IS UNDER ATTACK FOR THOSE VERY IDOSYNCRASIES AND FABRICS OF MIND AND WAYS OF DOING THINGS THAT WASHINGTON HONORED AND ENCOURAGED OVER THE YEARS. HIS EXALTATION AND DECLINE TELL US AS MUCH ABOUT OURSELVES AS THEY DO ABOUT HIM.

8. IN MY TIME IN WASHINGTON I HAVE NEVER SEEN A PUBLIC FIGURE TREATED WITH THE AWE AND GUSH THAT KISSINGER HAS REGULARLY BEEN ACCORDED IN EVEN THE MOST CYNICAL AND SOPHISTICATED OF SETTINGS. LET THE WHOLE CABINET BE PRESENT AT A PRESS-CLUB BANQUET--THE FLASHBULBS WOULD BE TRAINED ON ONLY ONE MAN. LET A HOSTESS ASSEMBLE THE MOST ASTONISHING DINNER TABLEFUL OF DIGNITARIES, THEY WOULD TURN IT INTO A HUSHED AND ATTENTIVE SEMINAR, KISSINGER SPEAKING AND TAKING QUESTIONS. "SUPER K": THE MAN WHO WAS SOMEHOW ABLE TO BLUR THE EDGES OF OUR PROFOUNDEST DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE LEADERS OF OTHER NATIONS, THE EMISSARY WHOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHOU EN-LAI OR LE DUC THO OR ANWAR SADAT OR LEONID BREZHNEV MADE THE DIFFERENCE.

9. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I BELIEVE THAT KISSINGER'S PERSONAL, ICE-BREAKING DIPLOMACY--COMPLETE WITH THE STEALTH AND SLEIGHT OF HAND AND GENERAL CURLINESS THAT ATTENDED MUCH OF IT--HAS PRODUCED ACHIEVEMENTS OF HISTORIC VALUE AND IMPORTANCE. I WOULD PUT THE OPENING TO THE ARAB WORLD, NOT JUST THE OPENING TO CHINA, HIGH AMONG THESE. AND WHILE I HAVE MY DOUBTS ABOUT SOME ASPECTS OF THE ARMS AGREEMENTS HE HAS NEGOTIATED, I AM NOT PARTICULARLY SHOCKED TO LEARN THAT THESE WERE ACHIEVED WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INTERNAL GOVERNMENT HOCUS-POCUS--THAT IS ALMOST INVARIABLY TRUE. WHAT BAFFLES ME IS HOW THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN AWAY FROM THE KISSINGER FAN CLUB THOUGHT THAT THESE THINGS WERE BEING ACCOMPLISHED. IT IS SORT OF LIKE UNCLASSIFIED

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TELLING HOUDINI THAT HE HASN'T BEEN LEVELING WITH YOU.

10. WHAT ARE THE CHARGES? THEY ARE MANY. BY THE ACCOUNTS OF OTHERS MORE OR LESS AT HIS LEVEL IN GOVERNMENT, KISSINGER PRODUCES FEWER WRITTEN OR ORAL ACCOUNTS OF HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS THAN ANY SECRETARY IN RECENT MEMORY. HE IS ALSO SAID TO BE VERY SELECTIVE IN HIS INTERPRETATIONS OF WHAT WENT ON AT MEETINGS AND IN HIS ACCOUNTS OF WHAT HE IS UP TO. ON THE HILL AS WELL AS WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION, IT IS SAID THAT HIS IDEA OF "CONSULTATION" AND "CONSENSUS" IS ONE WAY, INCOMPLETE AND ELUSIVE. HE IS BELIEVED TO PERSONALIZE POLICY--AND CONFLICT AND SETBACK--TOO MUCH. AND HIS CLEVERNESS AT GETTING HIS WAY IS SAID TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A WIDE-SPREAD EXTRAVAGANCE OF SUSPICION, SO THAT--IN THE WORDS OF

ONE OFFICIAL--"PEOPLE ADD FIFTEEN IMAGINARY MANEUVERS TO THE FIVE THEY CAN VERIFY."

11. I DON'T KNOW--I WASN'T THERE. BUT I DO KNOW THAT KISSINGER'S PARTICULAR METHOD OF DOING HIS JOB SEEMS TO REQUIRE A DEGREE OF FREEDOM, PRIVACY AND LICENSE THAT

PEOPLE WHO MAKE THESE COMPLAINTS ARE NO LONGER WILLING TO GRANT HIM. KISSINGER HIMSELF ALLUDES TO THIS IN HIS FREQUENT COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE MANNER IN WHICH HIS ABILITY TO OPERATE IS BEING INHIBITED AND UNDERMINED. IN FACT HE IS NOW BEING TOO SAVAGELY CRITICIZED FOR A WAY OF OPERATING FOR WHICH HE WAS ONCE TOO UNCRITICALLY ADMIRER.

12. THE NEXT BIG TEST WILL BE THE DENOUEMENT OF THE SALT II TALKS--ALREADY TAKING ON THE CHARACTER OF "HIGH NOON." KISSINGER APPEARS TO HAVE COME IN SECOND IN AN INTERNAL DISPUTE OVER THE KIND OF DEAL WE SHOULD OFFER, AND IT IS FAR FROM CLEAR THAT HE WILL BE GIVEN THE CUSTOMARY MANEUVERING ROOM FOR NEGOTIATING IT INTO AN ACCORD. HE WILL BE WATCHED LIKE A HAWK--BY HAWKS. HIS POLITICAL OPPOSITION FROM BOTH ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM MAKES IT SEEM IMPROBABLE THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO USE ONE SIDE AS PRESSURE AGAINST THE OTHER. HIS ABILITY--OR LACK OF IT--TO PREVAIL IN THE STRUGGLE OVER SALT WILL BE AS SURE A SIGN AS

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WE ARE LIKELY TO GET OF WHETHER THE CURTAIN HAS FINALLY FALLEN ON THE GREAT VIRTUOSO'S ABILITY TO PERFORM. INGERSOLL

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